
THE ROLE OF BUREAUCRATS IN STABILIZING INTERNAL DEMOCRACY

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ABSTRACT.

Now that Nigeria has witness a successful transition from civilian to civilian government over the years, it has become imperative to identify the role to be played by bureaucrats in sustaining and stabilizing democracy for effective development. The paper identified basically three important roles to be played by bureaucrats towards democratic stability. First, intensification of advisory role of bureaucrats to political leaders and modification of policy issues at implementation level when advice is given a deaf ear. Second, Bureaucrats should not play psychopancy, because it is dangerous and can impede democratic process. Finally political neutrality principle should be strictly adhere to. it is hoped that if these roles are played sincerely by bureaucrats, it will help in stabilizing democracy in Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION.

Nigeria's political and administrative history from independence to 1999 is dominated by the military. Democracy has its slot at independence in 1960, but was interrupted by the military in 1966. Again in 1979, Nigeria witnessed a successful transition from military to civilian, but was overthrown in 1983. The military continued to rule until 29th May, 1999 when Gen. Abdusalami Abubakar peacefully handed over power to a democratically elected civilian government. The task ahead of Nigeria as a democratic government is to stabilize internal democracy for effective development. It is in view of this that, this paper seek to examine the role of bureaucrats towards maintaining and sustaining stable democracy in Nigeria.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION.

Fundamental principles and basic ideals that under line a presupposition of a phenomenon is regarded as a concept. According to Ujo A.A (2008:25) A concept can be defined as a word that is used to describe a group of things or activities of human behaviour. The paper therefore seek to explain and discuss concepts like bureaucracy, bureaucrats in stabilizing democracy in a heterogeneous nation like Nigeria.

BUREACRACY

The modern use of the term bureacracy has deviated from the French perception which means desk, to mean large organisations. Obiajulu etal (2004;78) Max Weber (1864-1922) observed that, bureaucracy has to do with authority in organisations. According to Weber, no organisation can exist without the influence of authority. He defined authority as the probability that a command with given specific content will be obeyed by a given group of persons through administrative staff. Weber argued as cited in Ngu S.M (1994:22) " that a secured authority could be required for the emergency of a very stable order of relationship". This relationship has to do with the hierachy in the organisation. Bureacracy therefore is concerned with authority relationship in an organisation. Awoniyi view bureacracy as all those institutions, agencies and organisations created or financed by the government and on

which the government can call as of right, either to assist in the formulation or to perform functions for which they have acquired specialized training.

BUREAUCRATS.

According to A.A Balogun, as cited in Ngu S.M etal (1998:60) Bureaucrats are the most senior corps of administrative and professional officers e.g Permanent Secretaries, Directors, administrative officers etc. Bureaucrats are therefore the administrative staffs, who occupy positions in their places of work in a hierarchy, based on their qualifications, skills and experience.

DEMOCRACY

The concept democracy has been defined by various scholars in various places. These definitions however revolve round representative government. According to A. Appadorai (1975:137) democracy is a system of government under which the people exercise the governing power through representatives who are periodically elected. This definition collaborate the famous definition of democracy by Abraham Lincon that, democracy is government of the people, by the people, for the people. Government parse, is the machinery through which the people in a given state derives or satisfy their desires. According to C.B Macpherson as cite in Richard. A. Joseph (1991:16) democracy originally meant rule by the common people, the plebeians. This means that, the common people who normally form majority have the deciding power on who should represent them. Lord Bryce as cited in Richard. A. Joseph (1991:18) defined democracy as government in which the will of the majority of qualified citizens rule. J.A Schumpeter sees democracy as that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle which produce representatives who are placed in positions of authority to exercise power. These elected representatives are supposed to have political liberty which is the freedom or right to contribute their quota to decision making in either of the institutions. These rights gives the individual the willingness to participate in politics and governance.

BUREAUCRACY AND DEMOCRACY

The definitions in our previous discussion attest to the fact that Bureaucracy deals with hierarchy in an organisational set up, while democracy advocates the development of individuals through popular participation, openness, liberty of the individuals and equality. The contradiction as pointed out by Weber is that, democracy is basically opposed to the rule of bureaucracy because, bureaucracy concentrates power in the hands of those who are in charge of Bureaucratic machinery, and such concentration of power is against the basic ideals of democracy which is control of power by elected or nominated representatives. Weber as cited in ugo E.A (2008:65) however acknowledges the fact that, without bureaucracy, democracy could be plagued by spoil system, irregularities, public waste and complete lack of technical efficiency. In view of the above, bureaucracy and democracy play complimentary roles for the development of the state.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

One of the challenges faced by bureaucrats in modern governments is basically, the commandeering character of the political executives. The problem is, to what extent does the political executive take the advice of bureaucrats? Does most advice fall on deaf ears? Does absence of participation, team work etc give rise to sychophancy? A critical analysis of these questions and others may inform us properly on the problem areas that necessitated this work. This work will therefore examine whether, the bureaucrats play their role as professionals or play sychophancy.

THEORETICAL FRAME WORK

A theory is a system of ideas held to explain group of facts or phenomena.i.e basic ideas put forward to explain certain facts about a particular thing. This work is premised on the participately style of management and administration, championed by Mc Gregor Douglas theory Y. The idea is that both political executive and bureaucrats are expected to work as a team to be able to achieve set goals in an organisation.

NIGERIA'S JOURNEY FOR STABLE DEMOCRACY

Stable democracy is refer to a responsive government that is determined to provide protection of lives and properties, economic and social welfare services for its citizenry. A government free from political crisis, rigging, thuggery and intimidation. Nigeria's journey for a stable democracy can be traced from the first republic which was characterized by constitutional crisis as regard the functions of the prime Minister and the Governor-General. The system was patterned under the British parliamentary model (West Minister).The Republic did not last for long and was interrupted by a coup detat that ushered in the first military regime. The military had several coups and counter-coups until in 1979 when Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo handed over the mantle of leadership to another civilian government. This time around, the British Parliamentary model proved not to work for Nigerian society and hence, the introduction of presidential model, patterned after the U.S.A model.

Five political parties were registered by FEDECO, during the 1979 Election . These were:-

- i. The National party of Nigeria (NPN)
- ii. The Unity party of Nigeria (UPN)
- iii. The Nigerian Peoples Party (NPP)
- iv. The Great Nigerian Peoples Party (GNPP)
- v. The Peoples Redemption party (PRP)

The five political parties contested elections which were held on weekly basis. The National party of Nigeria (NPN) was declared the winner of the presidential election. The Unity party of Nigeria (UPN) had a legal battle with N.P.N over 2/3 majority of 19 states, the supreme Court however decided in favor of N.P.N. Alhaji Shehu Shagari was sworn in as the president of the federal Republic of Nigeria on 1st October 1979. The military again struck in 1983 and hold on to power until 29th may, 1999 when Gen. Abubakar Abubakar Abdulsalami handed over peacefull to a democratically elected civilian government headed by chief Olusegun

Obasanjo. Gen Abubakar actually achieved the feat in less than nine months, what Gen. Babangida and Abacha could not achieve in 8 years and 5 years respectively. This clearly points to the fact that, a transition to civilian rule can be achieved in a very short time, if the handlers are patriotic and sincere to themselves. The journey for a stable democracy in Nigeria has been long and rough because of deceit and insincerity of purpose by the military, coupled with sycophancy on the part of politicians.

THE ROLE OF BUREAUCRATS IN STABILIZING DEMOCRACY.

I have defined bureaucrats as administrative and professional officers who occupy positions based on their qualifications, skills and experience. Role is referred to functions performed or to be performed. The role of bureaucrats therefore is the functions to be performed by bureaucrats or administrators towards sustaining stability in Nigeria's democracy. Bureaucrats or administrators are saddled with the responsibility of helping politician, shape and develop policies in their various ministries. Bureaucrats are career civil servants who worked in ministries and have acquired the requisite experience and skills in carrying out governmental functions more than the politicians, who are mostly fresh graduates from tertiary institutions and from business circles without the experience of how governmental functions are carried out. Bureaucrats therefore stand a better chance to carefully advise, guide and assist their political leaders on policy issues that would in the long run be of benefit to the society and hence stabilize democratic government. In situations where political leaders feel they know all and refuse to incorporate Bureaucrats in planning, Bureaucrats should as a matter of principle modify policy issues at the implementation level to add more substance to it. The 1988 civil service reforms which emphasize professionalism add more ingredients to their role as helpers in policy formulation and implementation. This is because, Bureaucrats work in ministries and parastatals year in and year out, and know virtually everything that is needed to move the ministry forward and can better advise the executives or political leader on how to go about issues to protect, defend and sustain democracy.

SUGGESTIONS

It is imperative to mention here that, for a stable democracy to be ensured, Bureaucrats are not to play sycophancy i.e beating drums of praises even when the right thing is not done, Any attempt to compromise their advisory role for sycophantic game, endangers and jeopardizes democratic stability. More so, Bureaucrats are fundamentally supposed to be politically neutral to be able to support any government that comes on board to control political power. Any attempt to play politics portrays Bureaucrats as partisan and hence, a loss of credibility. Therefore, for stable democracy to be ensured, Bureaucrats are continuously supposed to be politically neutral, to be able to discharge their functions and responsibilities creditably.

CONCLUSION.

The journey towards a stable democracy in Nigeria over the years has been very rough, because major players in the game are deceitful, insincere to themselves and the country at large. Bureaucrats are either denied their role or they play the sycophantic game of praise

singers to political leaders. It is hoped that, for an enduring and stable democracy, Bureaucrats have to play their fundamental role of advisers to the political executives without fear or favor.

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